

## HISTORY

*The history and importance of the Arkansas River is as rich and diverse as any river system in the United States.*

At 1450 miles long, the Arkansas River is the longest tributary to the Mississippi-Missouri river system. It passes through four states: Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

In 1541 Vasquez de Coronado, the famous Spanish explorer, crossed the Arkansas River near present-day Dodge City.



By the late 1850's, the Arkansas River was full of water and had established banks 800-1200 feet wide. Yet, due to the river's dynamics, the riverbed was dry sand above the mouth of the Little Arkansas River in 1865.

*Photo used with permission from the Kansas State Historical Society*

Boats, used to descend the river, were built in Wichita between 1870-1880. In one instance, two men built a boat in Wichita and navigated the river and gulf to Florida.

The waters of the Arkansas River have been used extensively for irrigation in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. In 1890, twenty thousand acres of land were irrigated from the Arkansas River, but by 1960 that number totaled over one million acres.

*The greatest flood of the Arkansas River ever known occurred in 1927. With excessive rainfall, the Arkansas River became a conduit for a ten-foot wall of water with registered flows of 750,000 cubic feet per second. That is the equivalent to 100,260 gallons of water passing by a tree on the bank every second. Today's average flow in Wichita is approximately*

## FISHING

*Many popular fishing spots provide fun for the whole family.*

Throughout the City of Wichita, there are numerous opportunities for sport fishing on the Arkansas River. Species such as channel catfish, flathead catfish, carp, buffalo, largemouth and white bass, several species of sunfish, as well as the occasional walleye, wiper and crappie can be caught in the Arkansas River. For licenses and consumption advisories, contact the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

### Hot Fishing Spots:

Below Lincoln Street dam

Confluence of the Big and Little Arkansas Rivers near the Mid-American All Indian Center

Confluence of the Big Arkansas and the Wichita-Valley Center Floodway

Low water dam at 21<sup>st</sup> Street and the Little Arkansas River

Effluent discharge from the City of Wichita Wastewater Treatment Facility at 63<sup>rd</sup> Street South

## THREATENED AND ENDANGERED FISH

*Throughout Sedgwick County the Arkansas River is home to several species of shiners and minnows that most people would refer to as "just plain ol' minnows." However, these species are just as important to the dynamics of the river as sport fish.*

Some minnow species are considered to be "indicator" species. They are typically intolerant of pollution and habitat degradation and, therefore, their numbers can indicate the general health of a stream.

There are four rare species found within the waters of the Little and Big Arkansas Rivers within Sedgwick County. These species are the Plains Minnow, Speckled Chub, Arkansas River Darter and the Arkansas River Shiner.

## WATCHING WILDLIFE

*There are more wild animals than people in Wichita!*

Wichita is one of the best places in Kansas for close viewing of large flocks of Canada geese. Over 15,000 geese arrive in fall; the best viewing occurs between late November and early March. The geese are outstanding subjects for wildlife photographers. The best viewing areas are along the Big Arkansas River north of Pawnee Street and on the Little Arkansas River along Oak Park and Central Riverside Park.

At Central Riverside Park, be sure to visit the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit, which features beavers, bobcats, porcupines, hawks, owls, turtles and other native animals.



From late April through September, great egrets, snowy egrets, and little blue herons are often seen fishing along the rivers. A couple of good spots to watch for them are the Big Arkansas River north of Pawnee Street and in the river adjacent to Old Cowtown Museum and Sim Park.

## CANOEING

*As one of Kansas' three navigable rivers, the Arkansas is legally floatable within the confines of its banks.*

One of the most scenic places for canoeing in Wichita is in Central Riverside Park. Watch for geese, herons and foxes along the banks. The Arkansas River is open to canoeing throughout the City. However, there are dams at the 21<sup>st</sup> Street bridge and the Lincoln Street that will require boaters to portage.

## Advisories

Bridges over the river are public access points. Remember to stay within the confines of the banks unless you have permission from the landowner.

Be sure to wear a PFD (personal flotation device) at all times. High water can hide hidden logs and other structures as well as a swift current.

For motorized boat access information, contact the City of Wichita Parks Department.

## Help Keep Our Water Clean!

Pick up after your pets.

Maintain your vehicles to prevent leakage of automotive fluids.

Use commercial car washes.

Follow the directions on insecticides and herbicides very carefully.

Pick up litter.

Dispose of small business and household waste properly, Call 660-7464 for more information.

For more information on the Arkansas River...

### City of Wichita

[www.wichita.gov](http://www.wichita.gov)

Department of Environmental Health

316-268-8351

Water and Sewer Department

316-268-4505

Parks Department

316-268-4361

### Sedgwick County Conservation

District

316-729-0331

[www.sedgwick.ks.us](http://www.sedgwick.ks.us)

### Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks

316-683-8069

[www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us)

### Kansas Department of Health and Environment

316-337-6020

[www.kdhe.state.ks.us](http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us)



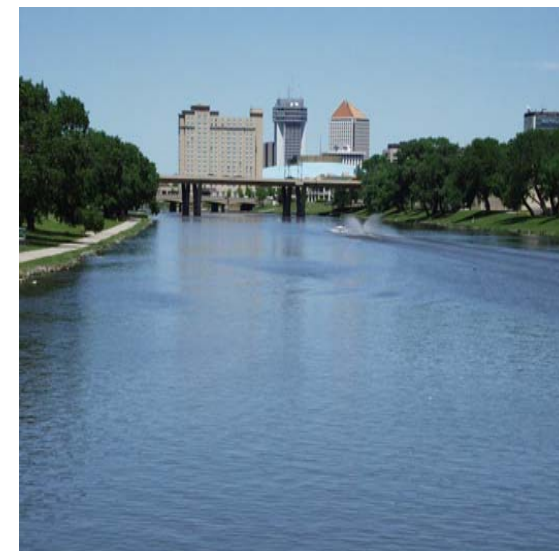
Our River Our Responsibility



## USERS GUIDE

# ARKANSAS RIVER

## *In Wichita*



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